

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6-8, and 23-26 are pending.

All pending claims stand rejected based on Mault (U.S. 2001/0044588). The instant application is a divisional application U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/809,915, which claims the benefit of provisional U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 60/190,272, having a filing date of March 17, 2000. The Mault reference has a filing date of March 29, 2001 and claims the benefit of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/669,125, filed Sep. 25, 2000; U.S. provisional application Ser. No. 60/195,779, filed Apr. 10, 2000; No. 60/235,739, filed Sep. 27, 2000; No. 60/225,454, filed Aug. 15, 2000; and No. 60/254,911, filed Dec. 11, 2000. Since the earliest effective filing date of the Mault reference does not predate the filing date of the present application, the Mault reference does not qualify as prior art. Applicants wish to note that, in the Mault published application, the reference made to application No. 08/803,399 filed on Feb. 20 1997, appears to be an error referencing an unrelated application. In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully assert the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

Applicants assert that the remarks presented herein are fully responsive to the Office Action and are sufficient to overcome the rejections presented in the Office Action. Applicants respectfully assert that the present claims are in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of the instant rejections and issuance of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Further, Applicants reserve the right to re-present any originally filed, cancelled, and/or previously unclaimed subject matter in a subsequently filed continuing application without prejudice or disclaimer.

Should any issues remain outstanding, the Examiner is urged to telephone the undersigned to expedite prosecution. The Commissioner is authorized to

charge any deficiencies and credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 13-2546.

Respectfully submitted,

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